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ABSTRACT

In Plains Indian tradition, a warrior gained honor and glory by "counting coup," touching his enemy in battle and living to tell the tale. This is a modern story of counting coup that follows a talented young woman named Sharon LaForge, a gifted basketball player and a descendant of one of George Armstrong Custer's Indian scouts. Although the book's format follows her high school basketball team's progress to the state championship, it is more than a story about the culture of sports and girls, it is a portrait of modern-day American Indian life on the Crow Indian reservation in Montana. Sharon, a fiery competitor with the skill to dominate a high school game and earn a college scholarship, carries the hopes and frustrations of her people on her shoulders as she battles her opponents on and off the court. The book delves into Sharon's life and shows the realities of the reservation: shattered families, bitter tribal politics, friction between Whites and Indians, and the struggle against a belief that Indian children, even the most intelligent and talented, are destined for heartbreak. Although Sharon's team did not make the state championship and she did not get a college scholarship, the epilogue relates how she finally did attend college in spite of many hardships, and considers that feat her biggest win. (Contains an index and photographs.) (Author/TD)

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